

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë (1847)

At Emily Brontë's times, the critics found *Wuthering Heights* morbid and violent. Charlotte Brontë felt forced to write a defence of her sister's novel because it has been misunderstood. Some critics of her time, anyway, already appreciated the way characters were described and the genius of the author in using words. But in the whole the novel must have been appeared barbaric for the Victorian readers. Her reputation was only established at the end of the century. Actually, *Wuthering Heights* is not an easy book to interpret and its author was an individualist who did not follow the way of plain conventions. It cannot be considered a Victorian novel as a study of common men and women and it is not a novel of revenge or of love. Here are some examples of how the critics have tried to explain the complexity of Brontë's work it is an allegory about the conception of the universe built from different forces, storm and calm. The central purpose is to re(establish the cosmic order that has been destroyed with an improper mixture of the two forces)the marriages*. It is the psychological study of a man whose soul is divided between love and hate, whose actions are the product of the distortion of his natural personality. He does not follow Christian values& his soul is primitive and pagan. The evil that he does derives not from love of evil, but from the upsetting of the natural process of love. Even Cathy's personality is not as strong as Heathcliffs. It is an unconventionally narrated story divided into five acts like the Elizabethan drama, a sort of autobiography told by two narrators, Nelly Dean and Mr. Loowood in a unity of place and tone. It is a tragedy whose power lies in the inevitability of this tragedy& a pair so stormy as Cathy and Heathcliff cannot settle to a normal domestic life, also because of the foster kinship. It is a drama that pivots around a vague incestuous aura - Earnshaw has found Heathcliff, during a journey to Liverpool. The circumstance of this meeting does not appear clear and leaves some perplexities that can be explain with a hypothesis& Heathcliff is an illegitimate son of the doctor himself. Here are other examples of incestuous unions in the book#2 the marriage between Hareton and Catherine at the end is the most evident. His view can support the power of the love between Heathcliff and Cathy& they could never marry on earth, as they are victims of a fate beyond their control. The sentence 3\$ am !eathcliff4 suggests they are one flesh as well as one spirit. It is a drama in which the writer fuses real things with their imaginative interpretations, with the feeling that only a poem based on the language of sense impressions can give. It is a journey into the soul of /an, a worth of edification and growth that teaches human passions and the vanity of human wishes. Human feelings are compared with natural forces wild animals and the landscape is applied to the description of the Characters. Heathcliff is lined to elements of the Earth, Cathy to the fire. Domestic animals are instead used to mock human weariness It is a novel based on the principles of storm and calm, two forces that are not in open conflict but are two separate aspects of a harmonic spirit. They are not destructive in themselves, but their balance must always be restored if momentarily interrupted. According to this interpretation, the purpose of the novel is to reconcile conflicting

attractions& storm and calm, instinct and rationality, heart and head. At the end, 'Earnshaw's energy is modified by the 0inton's calm. Actually, Wuthering !ights is all these elements together as it represents a turning point in the way of writing novels in the 56th century. \$t is a boo# which starts when the actions are over, the narrators are different and the author appears detached from the story she has written, a story of passions that Emily Brontë did not experience.'he structure is circular as it ends where it had started and Catherine, Cathy's daughter, gets the name of Earnshaw at the end, marrying Hareton, son of Hindley Earnshaw, the name and the surname that were of her mother. The balance has been re-established, nature is following again its course with the union in life of two souls results of love, the death of the ones who lived in hate and the final union of two spirits forever. 'he style the author used is peculiar& it was defined sensuous because, without lingering on description, she depicts the world she felt vividly, intensely using a sort of poetical language that appeal to senses and to the reader imagination. She often implies a connection between human beings and natural world following the 7omantic tradition. "ith the compression of poetry, she conveys her idea with simple images. 'he central theme is the ideal love and the conse8uences of its frustration.0ove is natural2 it is a fundamental force associated with the basic physical elements of the earth. Hatred is artificially induced. But Emily Brontë's purpose is to show the impossibility of reducing human life to a strict moral code. Wuthering Heights is 7omantic because it describes passions and is centred on feelings, on a strong personality, but the way it is narrated is totally new. \$t can be defined 9othic as Heathcliff seems a villain, a black hero of a horror story whose cruelty shocks the reader, but actually he is a pure and simple man who reacts to treachery and dies for love